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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 007549

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#) [OVIP](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR VISIT TO EGYPT OF IRAQI POLICY

COORDINATOR AMBASSADOR JEFFREY

Classified by Charge d'Affaires Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Ambassador Jeffrey, we are looking forward to hosting you and your delegation here in Cairo to pursue the first phase of your Arab outreach strategy on Iraq. Your visit provides an opportunity to consult with the GOE on Iraq at a critical time. We believe you should use your visit to encourage the GOE to press the Sunnis to participate in the referendum and December elections and to invite senior Iraqi officials to Cairo for discussions on furthering cooperation.

2. (C) The GOE is focused closely on Iraq's impact on regional stability and on the Iranian element in particular. President Mubarak and his key advisors will need to be convinced that stepped-up GOE engagement with the GOI, so close to the October 15 referendum and the December elections, will have an impact, particularly given the potential negative domestic consequences of greater engagement. Because of the security and political situation following the killing of Ambassador Ihab al Sherif, the GOE is unlikely to send an Ambassador to Baghdad now. Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit, in particular, was stung by virulent press criticism that, in caving to USG pressure to boost Egypt's presence in Iraq, he had gotten one of his diplomats killed.

3. (C) Egypt's engagement on Iraq since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) has been sporadic but significant during key diplomatic efforts. The GOE supported the effort to re-seat Iraq in the Arab League and elicited international cooperation at the November, 2004 Sharm El Sheikh conference and the Brussels conference. The GOE's facilitation of U.S. aircraft overflights and Suez canal ship transits is critical to OIF. Egypt was also among the few Arab states to send an Ambassador to Baghdad and to welcome senior Iraqis to Cairo for discussions. The GOE has also contributed to feasibility studies regarding the possibility of extending the unified electrical grid to Iraq and has trained Iraqi military officers, diplomats, and civil servants from the Inspector General's office at various sites in Egypt.

4. (S) Although your GOE interlocutors will be polite, you can expect them to offer straightforward advice. The consistent message we have received from the GOE, including from President Mubarak himself, has been that the USG should remove U.S. soldiers from the front lines, reinstate ex-Ba'athist officials without blood on their hands, and engage seriously with the Sunni community. Among the GOE's deepest concerns is that Iraq will be broken up into its ethnic constituent parts, and that Iran will be the primary beneficiary of the division. Soliman may suggest that USG should open a backchannel with the Sunnis in order to establish a dialogue and possibly persuade Sunni insurgents to stop their attacks. Soliman will likely also urge the USG to bolster its humanitarian support in peaceful areas in order to improve its public image among the Iraqi people.

5. (S) You can expect Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa to complain that the USG's Iraq policy has increased sectarian division in Iraq and strengthened Iran's influence in the region. You should press Moussa and the League to follow through on its promise to support Iraq's political transition, to provide economic reconstruction assistance, and to facilitate greater Arab representation in Baghdad. You can also remind Moussa of his pledge to make positive statements on the Iraq constitution as soon as it is released. Although Moussa will likely report that he is having trouble identifying staff willing to serve in Baghdad, you should encourage him to open the AL Baghdad office at the earliest opportunity.

6. (S) We expect that your meeting with Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) and MoD officials will allow for a frank exchange both on areas for GOE engagement with Iraq and on the USG's Iraq policy. MG Fouad Abdel Halim, the Field Marshal's senior advisor, will likely offer again to fund fully the training of Iraqi security forces here in Egypt. He will also highlight the nature and extent of the GOE's military support for OIF (primarily through overflights and Suez canal transits) and will stress the importance of the USG-GOE bilateral relationship. DMI's MG Murad Mowafy may

assert that our policy in Iraq is alienating the Sunni population. During a recent USG-GOE intelligence exchange, DMI officers reported that military operations such as took place in Tel Affar are driving a wedge between the population and the coalition. They also believe that the Sunni leadership is too fractioned to participate effectively in the political process and think that the USG is overestimating the threat posed by foreign fighters in Iraq.

17. (S) Some areas of potential GOE interaction with Iraq that you may wish to highlight during your discussions include:

- outreach to key Sunnis to encourage participation in the referendum and elections

- pressure on Syria to take seriously the USG's request for cooperation on border security/counter-terrorism

- invitations to Iraqi officials to Egypt to explore furthering cooperation (Iraqi Interior Minister Jabr would be a candidate for such an invitation to discuss security force training)

- invitations to Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish leaders for meetings in Cairo to improve public understanding and promote balanced media coverage of the new government

- positive statements on the Iraqi constitution

- holding security discussions with the GOI in preparation for a return of Egyptian diplomats to Baghdad

- continuing discussions regarding the feasibility of extending the unified electrical grid to Iraq

- exploring the feasibility of training Iraqis at the Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority in techniques for safe handling of nuclear material, and

- facilitating MOI approval of an offer from the Egyptian Anti-Narcotics General Administration to train GOI police officials in Cairo in October.

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JONES